

A
L E T T E R
FROM A
MEDICAL GENTLEMAN IN TOWN,
TO HIS
FRIEND IN THE COUNTRY.

CONTAINING

An Authentic Account of the Difference between the MEDICAL SOCIETY of *Crane-Court*, and Dr. WHITEHEAD; during the late Canvass for a Physician to the LONDON-HOSPITAL.

WITH

A true Copy of all the Papers, both written and printed, which have passed between the contending Parties.

L O N D O N:

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[Price S I X - P E N C E.]

A

L E T T E R, &c.

D E A R S I R,

YOU say that you have heard some reports of the late proceedings of the Medical Society of Crane-Court, which appear very disgraceful to the members of it; and as you wish to be informed how the case stands, I shall take the liberty to lay before you every thing that has occurred, with its concomitant circumstances, that you may form a true opinion of this affair, and not be influenced by vague reports or bold assertions made by either party without proof; which are often the mere effusions of passion, or dictated only by interested motives.

On Tuesday, the 1st of June, a vacancy happened for a Physician to the London-Hospital, by the death of Dr. DICKSON; and Dr. WHITEHEAD, President of the Medical Society, and Dr. COOKE, another Member of it, immediately appeared competitors for the prize. At this period there was no
A 2 difference,

difference, so far as I can learn, between Dr. WHITEHEAD and the Society; but five or six young men, members of the same society entered the lists as Dr. COOKE's particular friends, and formed a part of the committee for conducting his election. This, to say the best of it was imprudent, if the members wished to promote harmony with each other; because it naturally laid a foundation for jealousies and divisions; and these were much increased by a very illiberal paragraph inserted in a morning paper, highly reflecting on Dr. WHITEHEAD, and which was the first commencement of paper war or dispute. Things were in this situation when Dr. WOODVILLE, one of the secretaries, wrote the following letter addressed to Dr. WHITEHEAD.

“ Sir,

As a motion will this evening come before the Medical Society, in which you are particularly concerned, I have to apprise you of the same, that you may attend accordingly.

WM. WOODVILLE, Sec.”

It must be confessed, that this has no appearance of a private letter of information in any part of it, but carries the face of being official, and by order of the society. In this light Dr. WHITEHEAD seems to have viewed it. It is obvious likewise that this letter was designedly calculated to express nothing certain, but to alarm the Doctor's

1 mind

mind with an apprehension that something injurious to his interest as a candidate for the London-Hospital was in agitation against him. And the short time allowed him to consider an affair so totally unexpected; the impossibility to consult a friend; and his knowledge that the writer of the letter and his connections in the society were a part of the committee for conducting Dr. COOKE's election, were circumstances which naturally tended to increase his apprehensions of a deep laid plan to injure him in his election. It is natural to suppose that Dr. WHITEHEAD must have found himself much embarrassed in the situation in which he stood, and have felt the impressions of resentment at such an illiberal attempt to injure him, without having the least pretence for a charge against him, as they themselves have in fact since acknowledged. In this state of embarrassment, and apprehending the secretary's letter to be official, he wrote the following hasty letter of resignation, a copy of which I have procured.

“ To the Medical Society.

“ As I have had some reasons to believe that the members of the Medical Society have very improperly made themselves parties in the present canvass for a Physician to the London-Hospital, and have acted against me on the meanest and most illiberal principles; I take this opportunity to declare

clare that I do not consider myself a member of the said society,

“ This is 'no new or sudden resolution. I have perceived, for some time, with great concern, that *several members seemed more disposed to make the meeting a cabal of parties* than a means of promoting useful knowledge; and have therefore intended for some time, if this mode of conducting the society should continue, to withdraw myself from it.

I am, &c.

Devonshire-street,

JOHN WHITEHEAD.”

June 22d,

by mistake written 21st.

Dr. WHITEHEAD himself has acknowledged that the writing of this letter was a wrong measure. He means, I suppose, in point of prudence, not of criminality. For however well grounded his suspicions were, yet it certainly was imprudent to mention them in so critical a moment; and Dr. WHITEHEAD would have seen the subject in this point of light had there been more time to have recovered from his surprise.

In this letter the Doctor says, “ He had *some reasons to believe* the members of the Medical Society, &c.—You will doubtless say there is no charge

charge here against the society ; the sentence relates more to the state of the Doctor's mind than to the society, and expresses only his suspicions for which he thought he had some reasons. But I must inform you, that by the " Members of the Medical Society," he declares that he did not mean or intend *all* the members of it. The letter was written in a hurry, and the expression doubtless is inaccurate; but he contends that it is explained in the latter paragraph, where it is confined to *several members only*. And you will easily see that a very little candour would have understood it in that light.

The proceedings of the society upon the Doctor's letter, you will find detailed in the following " true state of facts" published by the Doctor; where the obvious motives of their proceeding are likewise pointed out.

"A true State of Facts relative to the Conduct of some of Dr. COOKE's Committee who are Members of the Medical Society.

" The Medical Society of which I here speak is that which some years ago had the misfortune to fall into the most violent party disputes which very nearly destroyed the society; so that we have sometimes not collected six members together to make a meeting once a month. Of late several young men
have

have been admitted of this society; and these young men, I understand, now form a considerable part of the committee for conducting Dr. COOKE's election. Before their admission all party disputes had subsided amongst the old members that remained, and it appears that they were ignorant of the designs of the party in the present transaction. I knew not, indeed, but that, as a member of the Medical Society, I stood on terms of friendship with every member of it, having always conformed to its regulations, and endeavoured to promote its usefulness to the utmost of my abilities. Let any one judge then of the astonishment I was under on receiving the following apparently official letter from one of the secretaries.

“ Sir,

“ As a motion will *this evening* come before the Medical Society in which you are particularly concerned, *I have* to apprize you of the same that you may attend accordingly.

“ Tuesday morning.

“ WM. WOODVILLE, Sec.”

“ This letter I received on the 22d of the 6th month (June). It was put into my hands by Dr. WOODVILLE himself at the sale of Dr. DICKSON's books, about three hours, I believe, before the society was to meet and the motion to be made.

“ Confident

“ Confident of my own innocence, and that no part of my conduct was obnoxious to censure; and knowing the disposition of the persons concerned in the intended motion; that they were on Dr. COOKE’S committee and formed a considerable part of the members that usually attend the meetings of the society; I considered the affair as a pre-concerted plan to do me an injury in my election, and that these young men were going to introduce the like party disputes and cabals which had once before nearly destroyed the society; I therefore thought it best to withdraw myself from them, and immediately wrote a letter of resignation, assigning for a reason that they had acted against me on the most illiberal principles, and that “ *several members* “ *seemed more disposed to make the meeting a cabal of* “ *parties, than a means of promoting useful knowledge.*”

“ Any man who will make the case his own, will easily conceive that I must have felt myself much hurt at so unjust an attack upon me in the midst of my canvass, by the members of Dr. COOKE’S committee for conducting his election, and without the least provocation given them. Under these impressions the above-mentioned letter was written, which I consider as a wrong measure. Had more time been given me for consideration, I certainly should not have written at all; but either have gone to the meeting and demanded an explanation of

the grounds of their intended motion, or have left them to pursue their intended measures.

“ Two days after, that is on the the 24th, they met again, when the whole party were together and one of them in the chair. They now determined not to accept of my letter of resignation. It was urged against this, that they had no law to prevent it, and the constant usage of the society was against them in this case. The reply, I am told, was, if we have no law to prevent his resignation, we will make one for the purpose; he shall not resign, we will expel him.

“ Immediately after this motion had passed in a meeting of about eight members of the society, and before it was confirmed at a subsequent meeting, the same party were assiduous in whispering among the Governors, that something was very bad in the conduct of Dr. WHITEHEAD, and that the Medical Society had expelled him; though the whole was the transaction of a party, in the manner I have now described.

“ They founded the motion of expulsion on the reasons I assigned for withdrawing myself, and expressed in the letter of resignation; alledging that I had falsely charged the society with being a cabal of parties. But this is a perfect abuse of my words: I said only that, “ *some members seemed disposed to make*
 “ *it*

“ *it so.*” And these expressions, occasioned by their unprovoked attack on my character, and thus abused to serve a party purpose, have been made the ground and only pretence of these violent proceedings against me : but the following facts will clearly demonstrate that these expressions were well founded.

“ Through the whole of this transaction no mention was made of the intended motion against me, of which the secretary wrote me official notice on the 22d, and which was the cause of my letter of resignation. I am now told, that the secretary had no orders to write me that letter; and that the society, as a body, were ignorant of it, and consequently of any hostile intention against me. The origin of this affair therefore, has not been the act of the society but of the members who form a part of Dr. COOKE’S committee. This explains the whole transaction, and puts their conduct in a most ungenerous light indeed! It now appears to have been a contrivance of these members of Dr. COOKE’S committee, that the secretary of the society should write me the letter I have inserted above, *apparently* by order of the society, which being a wanton and unprovoked attack upon me, they conjectured might produce a variance between me and the society, of which they hoped to avail themselves at the present juncture. And if this be not a disposition to make the meetings of the society a cabal of parties, I wish to be informed what is.

“ It must be observed that the motion of expulsion was made after I had resigned and declared myself no longer a member of the society; and of this proceeding they gave me not the least official notice. Nay eight days after this motion had been made, and four days before it was to be confirmed, I received a notice of their meeting in the usual form, as though nothing was in agitation against me. Nor have they to this hour sent me any notice of the steps they have taken against me.

“ Let us take a view of this business. The secretary of the society, in his official capacity, writes a letter to the president, giving him notice of an intended motion against him, without any order from the society so to do, without their knowledge of it, and without any ground for a complaint against him in any part of his conduct; and this purely with a view to make a breach between them. The president thinking himself ill used by a party in the society, hastily resigns and declares himself no longer a member of it.—They refuse his resignation, contrary to the laws and usage of the society; they exhibit a false charge against him, become sole judges in the variance they had artfully produced, make a motion of expulsion in a meeting of the society of about eight members, after he had ceased to be a member, and conceal these proceedings from him—and this is done in the midst of my canvass, by a part of Dr. COOKE’S committee for conducting his election,
evidently

evidently with a view to injure my character and impose on the Governors of the Hospital, merely by the sound of the word expulsion.—This is a true state of this affair, so far as I know it, or can get information of it, and I leave every man to form his own opinion of this electioneering trick, so contrary to every principle of honour and justice.

“ My moral conduct has been stamp'd with the approbation of twenty years public trial; and the present proceedings against me are now fairly and candidly laid before the public; and on the good sense, candour, and integrity of the Governors of the London-Hospital, I cheerfully rest the issue, not doubting but on the day of election they will shew their disapprobation of such nefarious practices.

7th month (July) 22d,
1784.

JOHN WHITEHEAD.”

This State of Facts was not circulated till two days before the election, that is on Monday July 26; and on Tuesday the 27th it was inserted in the Gazetteer and New Daily-Advertiser. The reason of the delay, it is said, was this, that Dr. WHITEHEAD having received no official information of his expulsion, his friends were in doubt how far he would be justified in publishing it merely upon report. But as he might naturally expect

expect every day to be officially informed of it, they thought that he ought to wait as long as possible for such information ; and in case he did not receive it, the report being universally propagated, he would be justified in defending himself against the general rumour to his prejudice.

This turned out to Dr. WHITEHEAD's disadvantage. For on the morning of the election the following paper, in the form of a hand-bill, called a State of Facts relative to Dr. WHITEHEAD's expulsion, was handed about in the city with all the expedition imaginable ; it was read publicly at the Coal-Exchange, stuck up in the stair-case at the Hospital, handed to the Governors as they entered, and inserted in one of the daily papers.

“ A State of Facts relative to Dr. WHITEHEAD's Expulsion from the Medical Society.

“ Dr. WHITEHEAD having in a circular letter, addressed to the Governors of the London-Hospital, mentioned my name, together with that of the Medical Society of London, in a very improper manner, a regard to truth and to the reputation of the society obliges me to state some of the many misrepresentations contained therein.

“ In his letter dated the 13th of July, but not circulated till the day before the election of a
3
physician

physician to that Hospital, for the obvious purpose of not allowing time for a refutation from the society before that event should take place, Dr. WHITEHEAD observes, that Dr. COOKE and a number of other young men have lately been admitted members of the society. Now, unfortunately for Dr. WHITEHEAD, a curious remark occurs here, that, of all the young men, the Doctor himself proves to be the youngest in the study of medicine. In the following letter, written and delivered to Dr. WHITEHEAD by me, none but a guilty person could find a charge.

“ Sir,

“ As a motion will this evening come before the Medical Society, in which you are particularly concerned, I have to apprise you of the same, that you may attend accordingly.

WILLIAM WOODVILLE, Sec.

Tuesday Morning.

“ My intention in writing the above was merely to acquaint Dr. WHITEHEAD, that it was my design to take the sense of the society how far he was warranted in publishing their minutes without their knowledge or consent ; but, instead of availing himself of this candid notice to attend and learn the purport of the intended motion, he wrote a letter to the society of so extraordinary a nature, that they thought proper to call a special meeting
for

for the purpose of taking it into consideration. Of this the society gave him official notice, a fact which Dr. WHITEHEAD has denied: I have therefore copied the letter sent him by the secretary.

“ To Dr. WHITEHEAD.

“ Sir,

“ I am ordered, by the Medical Society, to request your attendance at Crane-Court, on Thursday the 24th Instant, at the usual hour; as they are of opinion that no member can withdraw himself from their body, without the consent of the majority of the members who compose it. They conceive that some vague report or ill-grounded conjecture only could have dictated the letter you addressed to them at their last meeting; and, in order that their resolutions respecting this matter may be marked with justice and founded on the basis of truth, wish to learn from you, *viva voce*, every circumstance that can tend to a full elucidation.

I am, Sir, &c.

June 23, 1784.

WILLIAM HAMILTON, Sec.

“ To this Dr. WHITEHEAD made no reply either in person or by letter.—The society having met in greater numbers than usual, and considering his present silence as contemptuous, and his former letter as fraught with falsehood and insult, came, *nem. con.* to the following resolutions.

I. Resolved,

“ I. Resolved, That Dr. WHITEHEAD, in his letter of June 21, addressed to the Medical Society, has uttered a notorious falsehood, in saying that a cabal of parties exists in the society.

“ II. Resolved, That in consequence of the same and other contemptuous behaviour, he be expelled the said society.

“ These resolutions, from motives of delicacy to Dr. WHITEHEAD in his present situation, were never made public.

WILLIAM WOODVILLE,
Correspondent Secretary.

“ We think proper, from the charge in Dr. WHITEHEAD's letter against the Medical Society, to declare, that the election of Physician to the London-Hospital has never been brought before the Medical Society directly or indirectly ; and that, long before and since Dr. WHITEHEAD's admission into the Society, no cabal or dispute has ever arisen.

July 27. J. C. LETTSOM, President.
JAMES SIMS, Librarian.
WM. HAMILTON, Secretary,”

This paper coming so suddenly upon the Governors, at the very moment of the election, greatly
C surprised

surprised them. They had no time to consider it, or to compare the assertions it contains with other circumstances. They balloted therefore under the impressions of the moment; and the friends of Dr. WHITEHEAD, seeing the name of Dr. LETTSOM at the bottom of it, who has acquired considerable reputation *as a practitioner*, and generally been considered as Dr. WHITEHEAD's friend, they were greatly staggered, without an opportunity of acquiring satisfactory information on the subject. This was very injurious to Dr. WHITEHEAD's interest, several of whose friends came to town intending to ballot for him, and returned without going to the Hospital. But notwithstanding all these efforts to injure him, he gained a majority of one upon the ballot.

You have now all the papers on this subject, both written and printed, laid before you verbatim, with their dates. You see the origin and progress of the affair, and you will form your opinion with certainty on the whole business. And I doubt not, dear Sir, but your honest and generous mind will feel resentment at the proceedings of the Medical Society, which I think will appear to you, as they do to me and many others, disgraceful to the profession of physic.

These feelings will still be heightened, if you turn your attention to some assertions contained

in the above paper, signed by the secretaries and by Dr. LETTSOM.

In the first paragraph it is said, "of all the young men (in the society) the doctor himself proves to be the youngest in the study of medicine." But this assertion is so directly contrary to the dates when they began to attend public places for medical instruction, and when they entered at the university, that till well-attested proof of it appears, you may put it down at the head of the following list of misrepresentations.

In the third paragraph Dr. WOODVILLE tells us, that Dr. WHITEHEAD has denied having any official notice of the special meeting called to take his letter of resignation into consideration, and he inserts Dr. HAMILTON's letter to convict the Doctor of falsehood.

I should like to be informed where Dr. WHITEHEAD has denied having any notice of this meeting. I have examined the True State of Facts, but cannot find the place: and though I know you have great ingenuity and acuteness of parts, yet I do not believe you will be able to point it out. The Doctor says they had given him no notice of the *motion of expulsion*, nor of the *charge* on which it was founded. Nor can I learn that he had any certain knowledge what the motions against

him were, till he saw them in print at the London-Hospital on the day of election. But he says nothing in his "State of Facts" whether he had or had not received notice of their meeting on the 24th of June, to take his letter to the Society into consideration.

What will you say then of a man who has the assurance to publish a misrepresentation which every man who has Dr. WHITEHEAD'S State of Facts in his hand can fully refute? And I apprehend that it will not increase your good opinion of Dr. LETTSOM when you see his name signed to a paper containing such notorious untruths against an old friend, and calculated merely to act on the minds of the public for a few hours only, to do him an injury, and serve a party purpose.

Dr. WOODVILLE says, his intention in writing to Dr. WHITEHEAD on the 22d of June, was merely to acquaint him of his design to take the sense of the society how far Dr. WHITEHEAD was warranted to publish their minutes without their knowledge or consent. But after what you have read above, you will not be much disposed to admit Dr. WOODVILLE'S assertion without proof. And here you must judge from probabilities. Read his letter—"A motion will this evening come, &c.—I have to apprise you of the same—WILLIAM WOODVILLE, Secretary.—I shall wish to

have your opinion whether these are the marks of a private letter from an individual, or of official notice. I assure you, we in town are decidedly of opinion, that it bears the true test of official authority, in direct contradiction to Dr. WOODVILLE's assertion.

But you will ask what were the minutes Dr. WHITEHEAD had published? They were these: 1. That he had been chosen President. 2. That they had unanimously requested him to publish the discourse he had delivered before them. As to the first, the society had published it on the 21st or 22d of January in the public papers, and therefore an hundred other people might publish it if they pleased. As to the second, the minute containing such request authorised him to mention it in the title-page of the Dissertation, as is usual in such cases. Can you believe it possible then that Dr. WOODVILLE could be so absurd as to intend a motion on either of these particulars? And the form of his letter makes it still less probable that any such motion was intended by him.

Dr. WOODVILLE's letter to Dr. WHITEHEAD (it being written without any authority) is generally considered here as an abuse of office that has few examples, and which demands the severest censure. I cannot learn however that the society has taken any notice of it by way of blame, but rather seem
disposed

disposed to countenance him. You will no doubt be astonished, and wish to be informed who are the members that compose a society that can pass over such abuses and irregularities. But of this I cannot inform you at present; four names you see in the paper you have read above.

The resolutions of the society respecting Dr. WHITEHEAD are as extraordinary as any thing you have yet read. “ Resolved, that Dr. WHITEHEAD has uttered a notorious falsehood, *in saying that a cabal of parties exists in the society.*”—When I first read this resolution, I thought I must certainly have misunderstood Dr. WHITEHEAD’s letter to the society. For I found a difficulty in believing that a society would enter words on their minutes purely of their own invention, and then charge them as a crime on their President; form a motion of expulsion upon them, and afterwards publish them. The thing is almost incredible. I therefore read his letter carefully over, again and again, but for the life of me I could not find any such words in it, as “ that a cabal of parties exists in the society.” I protest, said I to myself, it is so: they have invented words of their own, then charged Dr. WHITEHEAD with uttering them, and formed a resolution of expulsion upon them. Shocking, and incredible as it may appear, it is really true. I read in the Doctor’s letter, that “ *several members seemed more disposed to make the*
meeting

meeting a cabal of parties than a means of promoting useful knowledge ;" but this is totally different from saying, " that a cabal of parties exists in the society." You may be assured I was not a little mortified and provoked ; thinking it better that an individual should be capable of uttering a falsehood, than that a society should utter a known deliberate falsehood, charge an absent member with it, enter it on their journals, and expel him for it. I doubt not, dear Sir, but your honest zeal is already kindled against them, and your compassion excited towards a man who is exposed to such unheard-of illiberal abuse on the very day of his election, when no one had an opportunity of doing him justice. But I beg you to suppress your passion, to compose yourself, and consider that this was not an act of the whole society, but of a party in it. It is true, you see Dr. LETTSOM's name signed to the paper containing this resolution of the society, by which he gives it his sanction, and contributed all in his power to its operation and effect on the day of election. But I can assure you there are members in that society who would sooner have had their right hand cut off than have signed the paper you have read above. You must likewise attribute much to passion and party zeal in those that did sign it ; which certainly ran very high at the time. Perhaps, likewise, when the above resolution was made, the society might think they had accomplished what Dr. WHITEHEAD had said they

they were only disposed to effect before; and therefore his words might as well be altered a little to make them correspondent to the noble work they had now finished. Though I confess in this case, as more than half the work was their own, they ought at least to have taken half the blame to themselves.

You will no doubt be pleased with their professions of delicacy towards Dr. WHITEHEAD while candidate for the London-Hospital; as it was from this motive they did not publish these resolutions till the very day of election, though they had whispered them every where before.

You see that I have not sent you mere assertions, or my own or other people's bare opinion of this business. I have laid before you a true copy of Dr. WOODVILLE's letter to Dr. WHITEHEAD; of his letter to the society in consequence of it; and of the proceedings of the society, as published by themselves, upon the Doctor's letter of resignation. Compare these carefully together, and you will draw the same conclusions, and form the same opinion respecting this affair, that I have done. You will not be imposed upon by bold assertions, whoever may make them, having the same evidence to direct your judgment, that any other person can have.

From

From the papers laid before you it appears, that this unhappy affair has originated entirely with Dr. WOODVILLE, whose conduct has the appearance, at least, of a pre-concerted plan. How far he was aided and countenanced by his companions on Dr. COOKE's committee is uncertain ; but as his letter was clearly an electioneering manœuvre, it is not very probable that he would have hazarded such a conduct without the aid and support of others.

It is also manifest that Dr. WHITEHEAD wrote his letter of resignation under a deception ; being imposed upon by the secretary's letter, *apparently* official. This was an abuse of office which it was not easy to believe that any secretary could be capable of : and had he not been under the influence of such a deception, it is not probable that the Doctor would have mentioned the affair of his election to the society, in any way whatever.

Most people here think the conduct of Dr. LETTSOM very extraordinary in this business. He had given his solemn word and promise, to Dr. WHITEHEAD's friends, at the beginning of the canvass, that he would not oppose Dr. WHITEHEAD ; he had given the Doctor a letter, with liberty to shew it to his friends, signifying that he thought they would act very properly in giving him their support on the occasion ; and he had acted under the ap-
D
pearance

pearance of friendship through the whole canvass. Dr. WHITEHEAD, on the other hand, in defending himself against the insult of the Medical Society, had not mentioned Dr LETTSOM's name, nor made the most distant reference to him; nor does it appear that he had any idea that Dr. LETTSOM was any way concerned in that business. Notwithstanding this, on the morning of the election a paper appears against him, signed by Dr. LETTSOM, containing assertions notoriously false; which he knew were false when he put his name to the paper. He knew for instance, that Dr. WHITEHEAD was not the youngest of the Medical Society in the study of physic: that he had not denied receiving notice of the meeting of the society on the 24th of June, as any man may see by looking at the True State of Facts: he knew also, that the resolution of the Medical Society charged the Doctor with uttering words which he never had uttered, as you may also see by his letter to the society. Dr. LETTSOM could not be ignorant that these charges against Dr. WHITEHEAD were false; and yet he puts his name to the paper containing them, with a view to induce the public, and the Governors of the Hospital in particular, to believe they were true, in order to weaken the Doctor's interest on the day of election. All this he did just at the moment of the election; contrary to the most solemn engagements before made; at the time too when he was making professions of friendship to

Dr. WHITEHEAD, and address'ing him in private under the title of *dear Doctor*, in a letter which I have seen. You will say, perhaps, that if this be the conduct of Dr. LETTSOM towards his *friends*, heaven have mercy on his *enemies*.—How his enemies come off, I cannot tell, I am only describing his kindness and friendship to one who, so far as I can learn, had never acted in a manner hostile towards him. Nor do I, like some of the ancients, give you a fabulous instance of friendship, too great for human nature to admit of, but such as actually took place on the 28th of July last past, under the circumstances above mentioned, and which is fresh in the memory of many hundred persons in London. It is possible, indeed, that if some poet should take it into his head to transmit to posterity, in smooth flowing verse, so singular an instance of amity, they might disbelieve it, and think themselves wiser than we, who were on the spot and saw it.—You, perhaps, may be simple enough to blame the Doctor for carrying his friendship so far : but I assure you that some things may be said on his side of the question. For in the first place, he knew that every body considered him as Dr. WHITEHEAD's friend, and whatever he should sign, whether true or false, would be taken for truth itself. He knew also, there would be no time to consider the paper he signed, nor hardly to read it ; he was sensible that the sight of his name, with many of Dr. WHITEHEAD's friends,

friends, would be sufficient; *that* alone would operate for four hours, the time of the election; and any after-storm was of little moment; an hundred things might be said to evade the charge, and amuse the minds of the people, without affirming or denying any thing alledged against him.—You see, therefore, that much may be said in his defence, even by a weak advocate; and no doubt but many other things will offer themselves to your own mind, that might be urged to the same purpose.

Should you inquire whether Dr. WHITEHEAD has taken any notice in the public papers of the paper signed by Dr. LETTSOM and circulated on the day of election, I must answer in the negative. It was Dr. LETTSOM's name only which gave it credibility and effect; and he says that he cannot mention it in public without saying some things not much to the reputation of the Doctor's character, as a man of candour and veracity; and he feels strong objections against doing this. He has been under some obligations to Dr. LETTSOM; he says he feels their influence on his mind, and he professes a regard for him. And though he has not been ungrateful to the Doctor in several instances, yet he could say nothing in his own defence that would not reflect on the Doctor's conduct in the present affair; and the stronger the proofs of his justification, the greater the reflection would be upon Dr. LETTSOM; which might be attributed to a want of
gratitude

gratitude in Dr. WHITEHEAD, by those, who, unable to avert the charge from themselves, mean only to amuse the minds of the public by groundless reflections upon others. How long these motives may influence him to keep silence I cannot tell.

Dr. WHITEHEAD's *True State of Facts* appeared to many persons, on its first publication, almost incredible: but from the whole evidence on both sides, now laid before you, and from the extraordinary conduct of Dr. LETTSOM and the party connected with him, uttering and countenancing the most barefaced falsehoods on the day of election, that ever were hazarded by men who had any pretensions to decency or character, evidently shew you it was founded in truth. The treatment Dr. WHITEHEAD has met with is certainly unexampled in the city of London, amongst professional men. His cause appears to me to be the cause of humanity: the interests of civil society are connected with it. If these proceedings receive the sanction of success, there is an end of all decency and good order in society in general. Had he been ever so illiterate and improper for the situation he aspired after and has obtained, yet these proceedings against him could not have been justified. But as his very opponents profess to respect his abilities (and some of them, to my knowledge, have profited by them) their conduct could only have proceeded

proceeded from the meanest and most interested motives. I cannot but hope, therefore, that his opponents, from a sense of decency, will be ashamed of their cause ; and that his friends, who are as respectable as any candidate ever had, will be animated from motives of public good, to support him against such outrageous insult.

If you should ever come to London to settle in your profession, you will doubtless be frightened at the name of a Medical Society, and fly from it as you would from a steel trap laid on purpose to maim or destroy you. But I must correct your mistake, and inform you that there are Medical Societies in London where the proceedings you have seen above, would have been reprobated in the highest degree. But after the above specimen of the proceedings of the society in Crane-Court, I cannot blame you, if you are very cautious how you admit any thing for truth which they may publish on a future occasion, whatever the subject may be, especially while this party has a majority in it. Wishing you health and happiness,

I am,

Dear Sir, &c.

London,
August 1, 1784.

VERITATI AMICUS.

N. B.

N. B. In the hand-bill circulated on the day of election you see Dr. LETTSOM's name at the bottom of it, as though he signed only the last paragraph. But the paper containing charges against Dr. WHITEHEAD of the most serious nature, and Dr. LETTSOM's name appearing at the bottom of it, on the same side of the question, without any exceptions to what was said above, implied his assent to the whole charge, and gave it credibility and effect with the public, the same as if he had signed every paragraph. Dr. WHITEHEAD therefore ought, and I suppose naturally will, look to Dr. LETTSOM as answerable for the effects these false charges, under the sanction of the Doctor's name, produced against his interest : and in my own opinion I confess, I think Dr. WHITEHEAD has good ground for recovering large damages.

F I N I S.

